

SUMMER 2006

NEWS AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE PAMS PROJECT

New Jersey Division of Taxation

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What is PAMS?

PAMS is a web-based system that will replace the outdated MOD IV system, and will provide improved tools for performing property assessment and tax collection processes.

Taxation Working to Facilitate Tax Relief

Recent news about property tax relief has included references to technology for creating a credit on the local property tax bill. Until the PAMS software is fully implemented, the Division of Taxation will modify existing systems to

meet the goal of providing the credit. These modifications will be a temporary measure until PAMS is available to provide a truly integrated property assessment and tax collection tool. For information about the PAMS implementation schedule, see page 4.

Training Begins for PAMS Team Members

Exactly one year after the initial walkthrough of the new integrated property assessment and tax collection system, state, county, and municipal members of the PAMS team received introductory training on the beta version of PAMS.

Trainees included staff members from the Division of Taxation, the Division of Local Government Services, and the Office of Information Technology, as well as tax administrators, collectors, and assessors who have participated in design sessions.

This initial release of PAMS will continue to be modified through continuing design sessions; however, users got their first look at how to log on and off, how to navigate, how to access data through Property Records Management (PRM), and how to view and update maintenance transactions (iMaintain).

The technical introduction for OIT staff included an overview of PAMS architecture, how transactions store data, and how various roles function. The technical staff also reviewed ways to customize the system through changing menus, record lists, and templates.

Trainees with access to the Garden State Network will be able to access PAMS to practice and continue becoming acquainted with the system.



Burlington County Tax Administrator Ozzie Vituscka, with PAMS Project Manager Tom Bishop, learns to navigate in PAMS.

First-Hand Account: Patricia Hice, Assessor, City of Trenton

Assessor Pat Hice is cautiously optimistic about the new PAMS system. "If it does what they say it is supposed to do, it will make my life easier."

While she sees the benefits of having an integrated, up-to-date system, she also has reservations about how implementers will ensure efficient performance with 566 municipalities accessing it.

"There will be a lot of traffic, and every user has different levels of expertise and different needs. We won't really see how it is going to work until we use it."

Pat's other area of concern is user security. "We need to be clear on who does what, and when, at all levels. Who will have access to working files?"

During the modification phase of the project, implementers from Tyler Technologies' CLT Division have discussed how each transaction becomes part of the record, creating an audit trail that shows when and how a record was changed. The team is working to clarify user roles and to define what information each role will access in the system.

The City of Trenton Assessor's Office is currently using two systems and is doing double data entry for various functions, such as sales information and value changes. Pat expects PAMS to make her office more efficient.

"Entering data only once will mean fewer user errors. Also, we anticipate a revaluation project in the next few years. Using an integrated system and having extra description fields for ownership

and property information will help us with a revaluation."

Pat also expects to reduce her office's dependency on paper files as PAMS becomes fully implemented. Field investigation information and notes will be stored in one online location for easy access and updating.



Trenton Assessor Pat Hice

Leaving a Trail: Ensuring Security Through Audit Capabilities



Manager Rob Peckinpaugh and the Tyler/CLT project team.

Tyler/CLT's Project Manager, Rob Peckinpaugh, spoke recently about audit and security features in PAMS.

Security and access to data are major issues with any computer system, and users have even more concern when information is accessed through an Internet connection. Yes, PAMS will have well-defined roles, and those roles will dictate whether or not a user can make changes to a property record, such as changing building information or taking a tax payment. However, another important feature of PAMS is that any transaction is captured and becomes part of the property's history. Users will be able to review records to see what was changed, when the change occurred, and which user made the change—the who, what, and when for each update. This type of audit capability should provide a level of comfort to the user who is concerned about the integrity of the data. He or she will be able to review transactions, discuss changes, and make corrections if needed.

Connecting to PAMS: Is Your Office Internet-Ready?

Internet connections are nearly as common as electricity these days, with some type of service becoming essential for both personal and business purposes.

New Jersey municipalities have a wide range of technical capability. Some towns feel comfortable with advanced technology and others are happy to stay with paper stored in metal filing cabinets. However, as Assistant Director Steve Sylvester likes to say, people get ready, the train is coming.

PAMS will replace the outdated MOD IV system, and all assessors, collectors, and tax administrators will have some type of interaction with the new system.

To access PAMS, users will need an Internet connection. For the best response time for moving data between the municipality and the State, users will want to have some type of high speed connection. These include cable broadband, DSL, satellite, or T1 lines.

This spring, Taxation conducted a survey among assessors and tax administrators to determine what type of Internet connections were in use. Of those responding, most had high speed connections. All collectors have an Internet connection.

Installing a connection or upgrading to a higher speed will require some planning for the jurisdiction's budget, as the local municipality is responsible for the cost of the Internet service provider, hardware, and installation.

Now is the time to begin



An authorized user will be able to access the PAMS system through an Internet connection. Users will have a unique user name and password.

researching options for Internet connections with PAMS. Assessors, tax administrators, and collectors may wish to review the hardware, software, and Internet capabilities in their offices and begin discussions with local council or boards about what will be needed.

The PAMS system is being provided to jurisdictions at no charge, and Taxation anticipates that costs related to providing Internet service will be more than offset by cost savings related to the PAMS implementation.

In the coming months, the PAMS project's Municipal Liaison Team will visit municipalities to discuss the project. During these visits, they may review bandwidth requirements and can help with calculations needed to analyze needs.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS:

Minimum: 2.0 GHz P4 CPU, 256 Mb RAM with 100 Mb of free space.

Optimum: 3.2 GHz P4 CPU, 512 MbRAM.

MONITOR REQUIREMENT:

Any sized computer screen may be used; however, for optimal viewing, the recommended resolution and screen size for the PAMS application is 1024x768 (pixels) with a 17" screen.

WEB BROWSER REQUIREMENT:

Microsoft Internet Explorer Version 6, Service Pack 1.

New Jersey Division of Taxation

To schedule a speaker to inform your organization about PAMS, please contact Dana Max Supervisor, Information Services (609) 292-8311 or Dana.Max@treas.state.nj.us



PAMS Phases

Gap Analysis	July 05—Oct 05
Development	Oct 05—Dec 06
Conversion	Oct 05—Aug 07
Acceptance Testing	Dec 06—May 07
User Training	May 07—Oct 07
Cutover	Oct 07—Dec 07

For more information about PAMS, go to

<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation>

and click on PAMS.

Watch for information about PAMS coming soon on the MyNewJersey portal and through regular e-mail updates to assessors, collectors, and tax administrators.

Building The Future

During the May conference for the Tax Collectors & Treasurers Association of New Jersey (TCTANJ) in Atlantic City, PAMS team members gave updates about the project through a presentation called, "PAMS: Where Are We?"

Approximately 700 collectors and treasurers attended the conference.

The PAMS information booth was set up at the TCTANJ conference and at the June education sessions in Eatontown for the Association of Municipal Assessors of New Jersey (AMANJ). The PAMS team will present to the Annual County Board of Taxation Conference in Cape May, August 29 through September 1.



The TCTANJ conference featured a panel discussion about the PAMS project. From left: Pat Turin, Department of Community Affairs; Suzanne Olah, Millville Tax Collector, Bruce McLeod, Cape May Chief Financial Officer; Steve Sylvester, Division of Taxation; and Marc Pfeiffer, Department of Community Affairs.